

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUND NO. 5-5463
LARRY LESUEUR

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BASIC RESEARCH: A NEEDED BOOST

ANNCR:

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ASKED CONGRESS FOR ADDITIONAL MONEY FOR U.S. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT BY VOA'S LARRY LESUEUR. VOICE:

PRESIDENT CARTER PLEDGED HIS DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS. IN ANNOUNCING AN ELEVEN PERCENT INCREASE IN FUNDS FOR THE U.S. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH EFFORT, MR. CARTER STRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THE PROGRESS OF AMERICAN SCIENCE AND THE CREATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE IS IMPORTANT TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD.

MR. CARTER'S REQUEST CAME IN RESPONSE TO THE PLEAS OF A GROUP OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, INCLUDING FOUR NOBEL PRIZE LAUREATES, FOR AN INCREASE IN THE U.S. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH BUDGET. THEY URGED THAT THE UNITED STATES ENDEAVOR TO SPREAD ITS FUNDS OVER A BROAD SPECTRUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RATHER THAN CONCENTRATING ON A FEW DISEASES, SUCH AS CANCER.

THE GROUP NOTED THAT THE SO-CALLED WAR ON CANCER, PROPOSED BY THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND ENACTED INTO LAW BY FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON, HAD CHanneled MONEY IN ONLY ONE DIRECTION. AND THEY POINTED OUT TO A CONGRESSIONAL HEARING THAT THE PAST TEN YEARS HAS WITNESSED A DECLINE IN

GOVERNMENT MONEY AVAILABLE FOR BASIC BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AND ALSO A DROP IN GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO SCIENTISTS WITH BASIC RESEARCH PROJECTS WORTHY OF STUDY.

TEN YEARS AGO, THEY NOTED, HALF OF THE APPLICATIONS MADE FOR BASIC RESEARCH RECEIVED FUNDS FROM THE U.S. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH -- THE ORGANIZATION WHICH HEADS THE NATION'S MEDICAL RESEARCH EFFORTS. BUT CURRENTLY, SAID THE SCIENTISTS, ONLY 30 PERCENT OF THESE APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH GRANTS ARE RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDS.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRESENTLY SPENDS MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS ON MEDICAL RESEARCH. HOWEVER, ALMOST ONE THIRD OF THESE FUNDS GO INTO RESEARCH ON CANCER. THIS INCLUDES TWO HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS FOR CANCER TREATMENT, WHICH IS NOT CLASSIFIED AS RESEARCH.

THE EFFORTS OF THESE LEADING SCIENTISTS RECEIVED A QUICK RESPONSE. FOLLOWING PRESIDENT CARTER'S REQUEST TO CONGRESS TO INCREASE THE NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BUDGET, REPRESENTATIVE PAUL ROGERS, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE, SAID HE WILL INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL SEVEN HUNDRED TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS OVER A THREE-YEAR PERIOD FOR NEW SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

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